

# **Sell Your House Fast, For More and with Less Stress.**

**With a great home selling team!**



Home Stager



Realtor



Real Estate Photographer

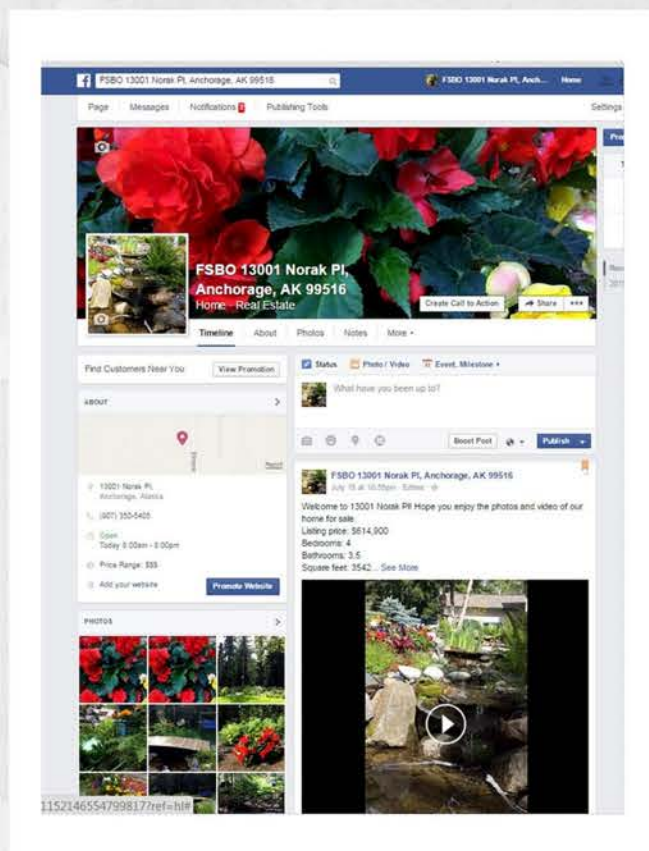
# CONTENTS



03 WHY DO YOU NEED A HOME SELLING TEAM?

04 HOW TO FIND A GREAT HOME STAGER

06 QUALITIES OF A FIVE STAR REALTOR



16 WHY YOU NEED A REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHER

18 MAXIMIZE YOUR LISTING PHOTOS ONLINE & IN PRINT

22 ABOUT NORTHERN LIGHTS HOME STAGING AND DESIGN

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# Why Do You Need a Home Selling Team?

For most people, selling a home and moving is one of the most stressful experiences you can have, so we want it to be as quick and painless as possible! And for most of us, our home is one of our greatest financial assets, so getting the most from our home sale is critical. To do that, we need to sell it fast and have buyers fall in love with it!

If you have never sold a home before it probably seems like the things to learn about the whole process is a little overwhelming and you are not sure where to start or who to trust to help you through it.

Or maybe you have sold a house before and did not have a great experience ....and you are not looking forward to doing it again! You may have had a realtor that was not looking out for your best interests or you did not get the price you wanted or the whole process took way longer than you expected. If you had already moved to a new location, were you paying the costs of two mortgages and home expenses while waiting to your house to sell?

Having a great team working with and for you can turn the whole process around to one that is fast, profitable and less stressful! That team includes a professional home stager, a great real estate photographer and a Realtor with your best interests as their number one priority!

So how do you find these people? How do you know if they are the best? Can you trust them? What should you look for? How much should you pay? Will it be a good return on your investment?

As a home staging professional, I work with other stagers, realtors, photographers and home sellers regularly and I see their stories unfold from start to finish and what works that really benefits the home seller! I also see patterns of mistakes that many people make which affects how long their house sits on the market and what their final sales price is. My goal is to help home sellers sell fast and for more, and so I was inspired to pass this on to you! Wishing you a fast, profitable and stress free home sale!



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# How to Find a Great Home Stager



The first step in your journey is preparing your house for the market. You want it to look great online and in person so that you attract buyers. You want buyers to fall in love with your house, visualize themselves living there and make an emotional connection so they will be happy to pay your asking price or more! The best way to do that is to hire a professional home stager to make the magic happen!

Yes, you can do this yourself, but will it look as good as if it is done by a professional? One advantage a home stager has over you (besides their training, experience, knowledge of the marketplace and what works) is that they can objectively view your house from the buyers perspective. This is something that is impossible for you as the home owner to do.

Hiring a professional, and a good one, will make a big difference in the amount you can list your home for compared to doing it yourself. Is the amount you save by doing it yourself worth it compared to what you may lose when you sell at a lower price? There is an art and science to home staging. There is a lot more to it than what you may be able to find online regarding “DIY home staging tips”.

It is in your best interest to hire a professional home stager, and at least get a consultation and an objective, professional opinion on what to do to prepare your house for the market. See my blog article on [Why Hire a Professional Home Stager](#) to find out more.

When hiring a home stager, I suggest the home seller does it rather than allowing the realtor to pick one for you. They may have great recommendations, but take control of this. Get the best!

Home staging can help you make a substantial amount more in the final asking price if your staging is done right! You should be able to make back the price you invested in staging and more! And, you may be able to write the staging costs off your taxes as advertising costs on your home sale. Staging needs to be done right to get buyers to fall in love with your house and want to pay your asking price or more.

Beware of Realtors who are not trained home stagers that offer to stage it for you. Poor staging will not have the desired result! A great Realtor will recommend and potentially pay for a home staging consultation for you. Consider carefully before allowing your Realtor to select and pay for the actual home staging for you. Although this may sound great at first and helps them to get clients, most will look for the cheapest stager to do the job. Some may mark up and pass on that cost to you. And, you will likely get what they paid for. An un-staged or poorly staged home may cause you more time on the market, numerous price reductions and the additional monthly expenses of mortgage costs, utilities etc.

I get many calls from Realtors that want me to do "light staging". This is a way to "stage" a house for minimal cost. It involves putting a few items of furniture, a plant or a piece of art in a primarily vacant house. It is a waste of your money. You want buyers to fall in love with your house and make an emotional connection. Light staging looks odd and distracting in the online photos and in person, as if the movers came and forgot to take a few things:)

Hire the stager yourself and get the best. Do they have training, education and experience as a home stager or designer? Look at their [portfolios](#) to see if you like their work. Do they have a professional looking website? If not, how will your home look when they are done? Check out their testimonials. What kind of customer service can you expect?

To get a great home stager, check out my article on [Five Massive Mistakes Home Owners Make When Hiring a Home Stager](#).

If you are on the fence about whether it is worth the investment to stage your home, take a look at the video of a recent staging project I did (click on the cover photo). Pretend you are a home buyer and see how the house makes you feel before and after staging. Did it make a difference for you? It will for buyers too.

# QUALITIES OF A FIVE STAR REALTOR

Now let's talk about finding the next key member of your home selling team, your Realtor!

Here are some tips from home stagers, realtors and home sellers on things to look and watch out for.

As a home stager, I have worked with numerous realtors helping clients sell their homes. Sometimes the realtor hires me, sometimes the home seller. In seeing the process from the perspective of a "team member", I have gathered my own insights on what qualities make a good realtor.

1. They believe in the power of quality home staging to get you the best price and fastest sale on your home. I think a great realtor will recommend a staging consultation and potentially even pay for one for you. They are not willing to cut corners by offering to stage it for you (unless they are a trained stager) or if they are paying for the staging, by selecting the cheapest stager or asking for "light staging".

While these tactics may save the realtor money, they are not in the best interest of the home seller. There is an art and a science to staging. If not done right, buyers will not make an emotional connection, fall in love with your home and pay your asking price!

2. They put your interests first above making a fast commission!

3. They are good communicators and collaborators which is key to being a good team member!

4. They recommend having professional photos taken of your property. This is key to attracting buyers to come and see your house in person.

**So what do realtors think makes a great realtor? Let's find out.**

# Tips for Selecting a Great Realtor



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1. What are tips to help a home seller find the best realtor for their team (home stager, realtor and photographer).

A good Realtor is one who can see the vision of how to best market and sell your home...all with a positive “can do” attitude that brings team members together. One who takes the time to fully listen to your needs and concerns, comes up with solutions to any problems and keeps you informed at all times.

Knowing the market is key to fully understanding how to position your property effectively. Price, position and presentation is the trifecta to a successful sale!

Having a Realtor who understands the value of home staging, professional photography, contractor repairs/updates, pricing and advertising/marketing is crucial to being able to sell well, and to have a positive experience in the process.

Talk with your friends, neighbors, co-workers, family and find out who they’ve worked with and what their experience was like. Check with local Real Estate Photographers and Home Stagers and ask them who they’ve worked with and can recommend.

2. What qualities are most important to look for?

Sellers should look for a proven expert in their field who not only knows the home selling process as a licensed Real Estate Professional, but also one who is a “Marketing Expert.”

Anyone can take the class, pass the test and get their real estate license...just because you have a gym membership, doesn't automatically make you an athlete.

And marketing is much more than plugging in property details in the MLS and pushing a button. It's about having a leader who knows the process to get your home marketable and "show ready", then have the knowledge to also manage the sale by keeping you protected and getting you safely and smoothly to closing. This takes time...so, you want to make sure your Realtor has time for you and doesn't pass you off to someone else on their team or to an assistant.

Your Realtor needs to be a very good listener and have the ability to adapt to your specific needs and ways of communication. Selling a home and moving can be very stressful and you need to have someone on your side that you can talk to, trust, lean on and ultimately like!

They need to follow through with their promises and clearly communicate the process so you are well-informed and prepared for a successful sales process. You are a team with the same goal in mind and you need to have someone who you know has got your back and is there with you every step of the way.





**Kris Bohman**

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**Real Estate Brokers Of Alaska**

**Co-Creator Of “The Value Driven Approach To Sell Real Estate”**

**Host of Anchorage Advice Givers podcast.**

**Co-founder of Anchorage Entrepreneurs Networking Group**

Kris Bohman is the co-creator of ‘The Value-Driven Approach to Sell Real Estate, a free book in which he outlines how home sellers can protect themselves from real estate greed and profit an extra \$30,000 on their home sale. He is a licensed agent with Real Estate Brokers of Alaska and a local entrepreneur.

“Real estate agents, politicians, lawyers, insurance agents – are among the least respected professions on earth” For an insider’s look at why that is true, check out his article, Mastering Your Craft.

“But the reason why certain people in certain industries are not respected is because they have wrongly tried to master a craft that does not serve their audience. Take my industry, real estate, for example, since I see it daily and have an intimate understanding of what takes place. Real estate agents work their tail off to master the craft of self-promotion. They practice and practice and practice scripts and dialogues, to use when cold-calling homeowners. They spend thousands of dollars on websites to market themselves, etc., all self-interest orientated, but when it comes to their customers – where the majority of their time should be spent – why have they not worked equally as hard to master the craft of achieving a superior result?”

Kris advises home sellers watch out for Realtors that use some of the typical approaches that have given the industry a bad name. To find out what to watch out for, read his article on “The SuperVillians of Real Estate”.

In his book, he outlines some fundamental mistakes not to make when selling your home and looking for a good Realtor including:

*Not taking the time to learn how to protect yourself from the biggest threat to your home sale profit and the greatest source of unnecessary risk: Real Estate Greed and Unethical Agents.*

*Don't fall for gimmicks or bait and switch advertising.*

*Don't assume an agent is good just because they do a lot of full color advertising or sells a lot of homes.*

*Don't make pricing decisions based on a "free home evaluation".*

*If it sounds like "hot air", it probably is.*

*Not taking the time to diagnose the proper route of attack.*

"Here is what I have come to learn: Those who are respected, regardless of industry or person,...., are those who have focused on mastering the craft that will yield their audience a superior result first, not on their own self-interest. Then utilize that mastered craft... to serve only those who can most benefit."

"To achieve something special for my clients, I want to work with clients who are as committed to the success of their home sale as I am."

Kris has each client read his short free book and together they work to follow the process outlined to get the most profitable results of their home sale. Some of the key points outlined in his book on things a great Realtor should be doing for you include:

Get an accurate and comprehensive diagnosis to determine the best prescription to maximize the return on your investment.

From the diagnosis, make an informed, educated decision about how to prepare your home for sale, not based on hype but on research and common sense.

Kris's approach recommends home staging, super-cleaning, professional photographs, great social media advertising, eliminating negotiations and low ball offers with a pre-listing inspection, and increasing your negotiating power with a home warranty.



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## Top Ten Tips for Choosing a Realtor

1. While years of experience often equate to increased skills, it is certainly no guarantee that a long-time agent is skilled or, unfortunately, adheres to a Code of Ethics.

- An agent with less than five years' experience can be very skilled if they have had past work experiences that required the same kind of skills as selling real estate.
- Less experience often equates to a smaller client base, so the agent will have more time to devote more attention to you, the buyer or seller.

2. A great Realtor®, regardless of how long in the business, is one that conducts his/her business with the aim of connecting with clients and developing a relationship with them – it's not just about the immediate transaction. Important qualities are:

- honesty
- integrity
- concentrates on the client's needs (above and beyond the minimum)
- communicates regularly with the client

3. Ask the agent what their marketing plan/strategy is and what kind of activities or events can be expected (e.g. Agent and Public Open Houses, Staging Consultation, online & social media marketing).

4. If you're interviewing several agents, don't be swayed by the one that says he can list your home for more than the other agents – this is known in the industry as "buying a listing." You as seller will pay the price for this as the property will likely sit unsold on the market longer than necessary because it is overpriced.

5. A good Realtor® will be knowledgeable about the current real estate market and the trends.

- Is it a Seller's or Buyer's market? Are prices increasing or decreasing?
- The agent should be up on community neighborhood areas and the types of homes and price ranges typical in those areas.

6. If credentials are important to you as buyer or seller, look for designations that are earned through performance and productivity.

- CRS (Certified Residential Specialist). It takes some time to acquire the CRS designation, so agents in the business for less than five years may not yet have accomplished the required components.

- GRI (Graduate Realtor Institute)
- ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative)
- SRES (Seniors Real Estate Specialist)

There are many more designations out there, but these are the most sought after.

7. If the agent calls herself a Realtor with a capital "R", that means she's a member of NAR (National Association of Realtors).

- By hiring a Realtor®, you get an agent who formally pledges to support the NAR's stringent Code of Ethics – this is very important! Honesty and integrity in a Realtor's character are the foundation for trust.

8. Ask the agent to provide a list of properties they have sold for past clients and their contact information so you can verify client satisfaction for this agent. If the agent won't do that, then move on to one who will.

9. Ask business associates, friends, co-workers, or family members (i.e. someone you trust) to refer a Realtor® or real estate licensee to you and ask the person referring what their experience was like working with that agent.

10. Personality! Skills are not the only attribute that's important. As a buyer or seller, you will be working closely with an agent for several months so you want to choose someone that you like! Two-way communication between Realtor® and client is essential for managing expectations, outcomes, and the future of this relationship.



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## Advice for Finding Your “Five-Star” Realtor

### **Be Picky**

As a home stager whose goal it has been to coach and support my home sellers to a successfully staged home and home sale; I have also worked with their Realtors or real estate licensees in either a direct, or indirect, relationship. From the perspective of a successful home stager, I can say that there are a handful of those real estate professionals I would recommend to my ‘realtor-less’ clients. Why? Because I know a “client centered” business when I see one (I operate one of my own), and secondly – I have seen the residual and financial impacts on home sellers whose real estate representatives were more concerned about their own time and success, or too distracted with the number of residential properties that they were contracting to sell, than those of each home seller they committed to.

### **Have High Expectations**

You will only get what you ask for, so set high expectations for your Five-Star Realtor. This type of Realtor is used to clients with high expectations. They won’t be afraid to commit. And home sellers with high expectations of their Realtor will need to expect the same of themselves. Use the Internet and do online research to learn what top notch Realtors are doing in today’s real estate market to so you are able to have meaningful discussions with your Realtor candidates. And though it may be helpful to seek out opinions of family and friends; you know your family and friends so take it with a little skepticism and a grain of salt.

## **Expect to Get What You Pay For**

If you want a top caliber Realtor to help you sell your property but only want to pay 3% commission, you will not attract your Five-Star Realtor. For a Five-Star Realtor, you will have to pay the typical commission for your real estate area. And because I hear over and over again about those realtors that make so much money; hear this -it is not as much as you would like to gossip about.

Envision the commission fee as a pie. The seller's Realtor must slice this pie into 4 equal pieces. One slice goes to the buyer's Realtor; another slice to the seller's brokerage and the last slice to the buyer's brokerage. In other words, your Five-Star Realtor will not get rich off of your commission fee so be mindful of how you approach or respond to your Five-Star Realtor, now that you have been enlightened.

## **Trust Your Gut**

If you feel your Realtor is not hearing your concerns, responding to your anxieties, helping you to assess and minimize all of your risks, getting back to you right away, using "assistants" to respond to your calls, not protecting your financial gains and losses by the recommendations they make, thoroughly vetting any sale offers and home buyers that come your way to ensure an offer is well matched for your financial situation and sale timeline, pursuing the buyer's realtor and lender on a daily basis to ensure that all mortgage loan requirements and timelines are met for loan approval on time, does not find alternatives to help negotiate the best sale for you, seems more interested in their commission and payment than your best deal, and who is very comfortable using fear based rational to recommend your home sale prices or reductions – then listen to your gut; it is telling you to do something different. Immediately release yourself from your current Realtor contract and get on with finding your Five-Star Realtor. It's too costly to you in the end to ignore your gut instinct. Costly in more ways than you can imagine.

I allowed myself to be swayed from trusting my gut instinct. The real estate market in Alaska was beginning to take a down turn. What this meant to many Realtors was that they should press their home sellers to get a deal in place (a less than ideal offer) and simply take it on the chin in order to sell a high-valued property before the market became flooded with similar properties. Taking it on the chin for my home sale included 13 weeks of one nightmare after the next, a significant price reduction (which you cannot increase once you decrease), delays in hiring packers and movers and shipping vans, extended storage unit fees, double mortgage payments, additional round trip airline tickets between properties, lost time on the real estate market, huge amounts of stress, and excessive anger that came from feeling no control over our home sale. At some point survival mode was not survival at all.

## **Embrace Failure & Re-calibrate**

As soon as I respected by gut instinct, I got my Five-Star Realtor. Within a week our home was back on the real estate listings. An offer was received on day 2; then another within 3 weeks – the one that we accepted; after two counter offers and a near failure once we were in agreement.

The knowledge, experience, integrity and skill of my Five-Star Realtor made THE difference. Along with her sage advice and experienced insight, our Five-Star Realtor also helped us stick to “our” game plan when we began to panic and doubt our good judgement. Stress overload and carryover fears often will resurface and an experienced Realtor will anticipate this. Our Five-Star Realtor remained level headed and savvy, she made sure we felt important, valued and listened to. She earned our trust and confidence while building trust and good will with our buyers and their realtor, and at every turn she took measures to reduce our risks while resolving issues that popped up during the critical negotiating period.

But, the most amazing attribute of my Five-Star Realtor was her constant positive affirmations that all will end well – and it did. These were the moments when she revealed her professionalism and her “client-centered” commitment to us and our success. You owe it to yourself to find your Five-Star Realtor, too.

# WHY YOU NEED A REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHER



**Owner/Photographer**  
**DMD Real Estate Photography**  
**info@dmdrealestatephotography.com**  
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Why are high-quality real estate photos so important? They are the first part of a listing that a potential buyer sees and also the part of the listing that people spend the most time on – 60% on average.

But the most important reason may be that you have about two seconds to capture a home buyer's attention. A great photo is much better at accomplishing this than a simple written description.

With that in mind, here are 4 tips for finding a real estate photographer:

## **Choose a photographer who has real estate experience.**

There are many professional photographers out there, but you want someone who has specific real estate experience. Photographing a home requires a different set of skills than photographing a person or a landscape, for instance.

A good real estate photographer knows how to highlight the most appealing parts of your home: recent renovations, a cozy atmosphere, and so on. Look for photographers who highlight their real estate experience or actually use the title of "Real Estate Photographer."



### **Ask for a photographer's portfolio.**

Reviewing a photographer's past work and clients is the best way to see if they are a good fit for the job. A photographer's portfolio will give insights into the types of homes they specialize in, what aspects they like to highlight, and the quality of the photos they take. Do you like the images? How do they make you feel about the home they showcase?

### **Call the photographer's references.**

References will give insight into the photographer's process and can give your personal thoughts on what it was like to work with them. Was the photographer reliable? Was he or she able to turn around the images quickly?

### **Look for a photographer who can showcase a home with more than just photos.**

Huh? Isn't shooting photos what a real estate photographer does? Of course. But some of them do a whole lot more.

As technology improves, new kinds of media give potential home buyers exciting ways to explore your home. Ask potential photographers to see a full range of their services, and look for someone who also shoots videos, provides floor plans, creates virtual tours, and more. Even if you do not use all of these services, having them available shows that a photographer is innovative and always looking to improve their craft.

# MAXIMIZE YOUR LISTING PHOTOS ONLINE & IN PRINT

The possibilities are endless! Here are a few great ideas.

1. Put them on the MLS on your real estate listing.
2. Create a website for your home sale.
2. Use them for social media marketing by creating a Facebook page for your home sale.
4. Create a virtual tour or video highlighting key elements of your home.
5. Create great flyers.

Let's look at an example from a recent project I worked on as the home stager on the home seller's team.



**Exterior Photo by DMD Real Estate Photography**

1. After the home staging was complete, professional photos were taken by DMD Real Estate photography for the MLS listing.



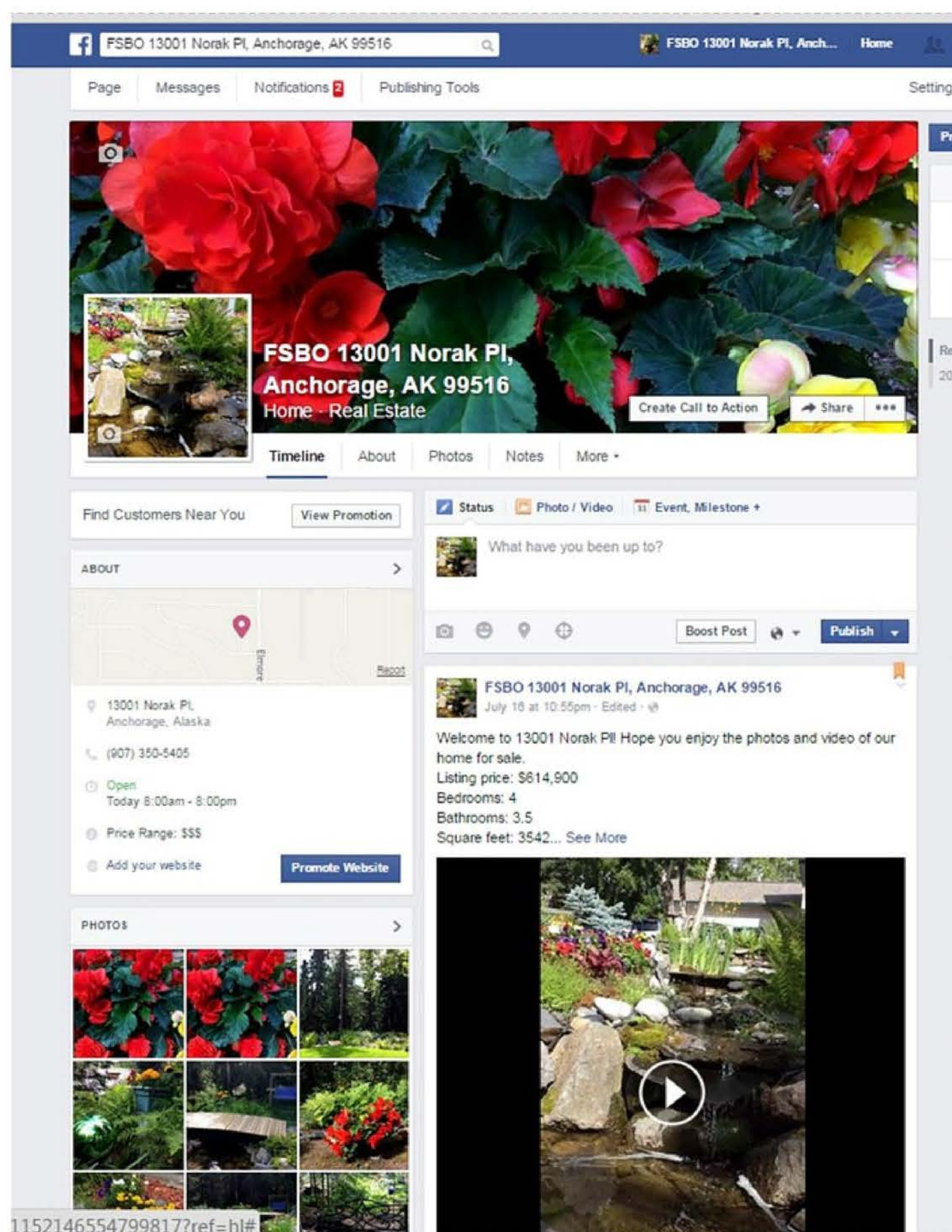
**Interior Photos by DMD Real Estate Photography**



## Interior Photos by DMD Real Estate Photography

2. DMD Photography created a website and virtual tour for the home sale highlighting the photographs.

3. I developed my own set of photos and created a Facebook page for the home sale with photos, descriptions and video to capture the essence of what made this home so wonderful. I linked DMD's professional photo gallery, website and virtual tour to the Facebook page, and created Facebook ads targeting specific audiences.



Facebook page created by Northern Lights Home Staging and Design

4. I created a [video](#) of the exterior and gardens for the Facebook page and YouTube to create a buzz! Click on the picture to see the video. DMD Photography also created a video of the interior, which was posted to the website and Facebook page.



**FOR SALE**

**7536 Old Hillside Way, Anchorage, Alaska 99516**

**Tour of the Exterior and Gardens**

**Call Stacy Goade 907-952-4331**

5. The realtor created a home sale website and flyers for marketing, which were also linked to Facebook.

**7536 Old Hillside Way**  
See More at: [www.7536OldHillsideWay.com](http://www.7536OldHillsideWay.com)

**Key features:**

- 4-Bedrooms
- 3-Baths
- 2,755 Sqft
- 35,430 Sqft Lot
- Boat/RV Parking
- Arctic Spa Hot Tub

• Schools:  
Baker Valley  
Goldmanview  
South Anchorage

• Directions:  
South on New Haven Hwy  
Wade's Creek exit  
1. Right on Wade's  
2. Right on Wade's  
3. Old Hillside Way to 7536.



**\$579,500**      MLS# 16-4450

**Sunny Views!**

Don't miss this chance to enjoy amazing Alaskan views and year-round sunlight from a home as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. Wrap-around gas-shubbed deck, Arctic Spa hot tub and gorgeous landscaping all provide ways to take in gorgeous views and sunsets. Main level features an open kitchen w/ custom cherry cabinets, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Vaulted ceilings in living room showcase mid floor-to-ceiling windows. Master bedroom & bath on suite are on the main level with another bedroom & full bath. Downstairs provides a multi-purpose family room with kitchenette, 2 more bedrooms, full bath, storage and garage access.

Other features include: California Closets in all bedrooms, Hunter Douglas drop-down window treatments, walk-in closet in master suite with double vanity, tiled shower and jetted tub in master bath. Extra parking for RV/boat, winter road service is provided. The first floor has insulated concrete form walls and the foundation is reinforced with steel. Concrete is encased by 2 inches of expanded polystyrene on each side for superior energy efficiency and noise reduction.

Freshly painted, clean and 100% move-in-ready!








FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Flyer created by Lora Nordstrom, Herrington and Company, LLC

This interconnected web of marketing in various forms and on various sites helped get the word out and generate a buzz with buyers! Without great photos, buyers would not have been attracted to view the property in person.

## Conclusion

**This home seller had a profitable and fast home sale once they developed their home selling team of a great home stager, a five star realtor and a great real estate photographer. An accepted offer was received in 3 weeks of listing.**

**The support from this team helped reduce stress for the home seller and contributed to a smooth and successful home sale.**

# About

## Northern Lights Home Staging and Design



[Mary Ann Benoit](#) is the President of Northern Lights Home Staging and Design, an award winning company specializing in home staging, Interior Design and social media advertising for homes, rental properties and businesses.

Mary Ann Benoit has a B.A. in Interior Design and is a graduate of the Staging Diva Home Staging training program. She is experienced in staging vacant, occupied and rental properties, creating Facebook pages and video for home sellers and vacation rental property owners, and Interior Design services. Her exceptional design sense, education, training, experience and emphasis on customer service make her a great choice to “make magic happen” in your home. [Ask our customers!](#)

Winner of the “Best of Houzz 2016”- Customer Service Award.

### CREDENTIALS

BA Interior Design- Mount Vernon College, Washington DC 1980

Graduate of the Staging Diva Home Staging Business Training Program taught by internationally recognized home staging expert Debra Gould.

